



# The Service Beacon

*A monthly publication for FSIS field and headquarters employees.*

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Food Safety and Inspection Service

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**bea-con** *noun*

A signaling or guiding device, such as a lighthouse, located on a coast. A source of guidance or inspiration.

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## DIRECTOR'S CORNER

### **FSIS 2000 Budget Hearings Process**

*by Ron Hicks  
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The President submitted his Fiscal Year (FY) 2000 government-wide budget to the Congress on February 1, 1999. In the March edition of *The Service Beacon*, I provided a summary of the proposed budget for FSIS. Since then, the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees have been conducting hearings on all budget requests. The hearings provide USDA and FSIS officials with opportunities to make their best public case for annual budget requests, which cannot be altered after the President submits the budget. Hearings are the time to present program accomplishments, ongoing program activities, and especially new program initiatives that demonstrate how policies are being implemented to meet statutory mandates. Members of the Subcommittees also have the opportunity to question officials about policy issues and the operation and direction of programs.

The Secretary testified before both the House and Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittees in February in support of the requests

of USDA mission areas and agencies, including Food Safety and the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS).

On March 9, 1999, Dr. Catherine Woteki, the Under Secretary for Food Safety, and Thomas J. Billy, the Administrator of FSIS, testified before the House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee in support of the FY 2000 budget request for FSIS and the USDA President's Food Safety Initiative. On March 16, 1999, the Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee held its first Food Safety hearing, which included testimony from Dr. Woteki, representing USDA, and officials from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The Senate hearing encompassed activities and initiatives within FSIS, and food safety efforts by other USDA agencies as well as FDA and CDC.

Following both the House and Senate hearings, the members of the subcommittees asked a large number of written questions, which is a standard part of the hearings process. FSIS is now in the process of answering the questions it received, which cover a wide range of agency activities. Final answers to all questions will be submitted to the Subcommittees following clearance by the Administrator and Under Secretary. The Agency's

answers are very important in influencing the Subcommittee members to give the budget favorable consideration.

The House and Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittees each "mark up" the President's budget in the spring, which is the process of developing appropriations bills and committee reports in response to the President's budget. In June and July they vote on the bills, which are later integrated through the conference process to become the annual appropriations act.

Attachment 1 to this edition of the *Beacon* provides a summary of the FSIS budget formulation process for FY 2000.

### ***The Service Beacon: A Source of Guidance or Inspiration***

*by Bob Byrd  
Administrative Services Division  
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We recently received an e-mail about the publishing of lists of Landover Service Center customers who were repeatedly sending in mixed orders. The lists were published in the January, February, and March issues of *The Service Beacon*. The concern was that we deviated from the *Beacon* motto, which states that it is "...a source of guidance or inspiration."

The *Beacon* communicates relevant administrative information to field and headquarters personnel from the Office of Management. This is often accomplished through insightful, informative articles. For the past two years, we regularly have published articles on proper ordering procedures for the Field Supply System, including the need to separate orders. Despite these articles, Landover continued to receive an unacceptable number of mixed orders, slowing down the process for all customers. Rather than sending orders back unfilled, or writing letters to each of the offenders, we believed that a published list was the most effective method to correct this problem. We didn't "name names," we only listed the establishment numbers and locations. The results of this approach have been positive, as the problem has decreased significantly since the first list was published.

In a very dense fog, a beacon may need a particularly powerful beam of light to cut through the fog to guide wayward ships home to a safe harbor. A weak beam of light would be ineffective and a waste of energy. We will not hesitate to use our "high beams" to help guide our customers into the safe harbor of proper procedure. The glare may cause a little discomfort to some, but the intention will always be to provide clear, concise guidance and direction.

As Glen Durst previously stated, our goal is to operate the Field Supply System with the efficiency of a commercial catalog operation, such as LL Bean®. Your continuing support and comments are appreciated.

*Editor's Note: A related article can be found on page 4 of this issue.*

## INTERNAL CONTROLS

### Internal Control Staff Investigations – In a Nutshell

by Valerie Jacobs  
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In this issue, the Internal Control Staff (ICS) continues its' series on information about our functions. The following outlines our investigative function.

ICS carries out its' investigative mission by providing an impartial view and examination of the basis and facts of employee concerns. Internal Control Staff seeks to assure that complaints are properly dispositioned to designated authorities for appropriate action. For example, complaints are referred to supervisors and managers, the Voluntary Dispute Intervention Program, Alternative Dispute Resolution, and the Administrative Grievance System, which is specifically designed for non-bargaining unit employees. ICS is further working to communicate other avenues available to employees to address their concerns.

The Inspector General Act of 1978, Public Law (PL) 95-452, Section 7 was enacted to authorize agencies to receive and investigate complaints from employees and the general public who have information which they believe violates laws, rules, regulations, abuse of authority, mismanagement, or is a specific danger to public health and safety. The law also prohibits any person from taking or threatening to take any unfair action against an employee in reprisal for disclosing information or allegations of wrongdoing.

Office of Inspector General (OIG)  
Hotline Complaints include:

- fraud, waste, and abuse of USDA programs, rules or regulations;
- violations that affect the public health and safety of others;
- serious misconduct that affects the health and safety of USDA programs, employees, or others, and that will likely result in criminal prosecution if the allegations are proven.

ICS is responsible for implementing PL 95-452. As the liaison for FSIS, Internal Control Staff receives complaints of various matters and authorizes an inquiry or investigation. ICS oversees the investigations and inquiries into OIG Hotline complaints.

An investigation is a formal process that involves gathering evidence, taking sworn affidavits, and reporting the findings in a written report. An inquiry is a less formal process that does not involve the taking of sworn affidavits. ICS's primary purpose for conducting or overseeing investigations and inquiries is to resolve issues and ultimately eliminate jeopardy to FSIS resources.

When Internal Control Staff receives a complaint from the OIG Hotline, the staff determines whether the complaint warrants an investigation or inquiry by ICS or another office within FSIS. Allegations determined to warrant an investigation are investigated by the ICS, or assigned to one of the 60 credentialed investigators in the Agency. Allegations requiring an inquiry are assigned to an authorized individual within FSIS who looks into the issues and provides a report to ICS. Internal Control Staff receives and reviews the reports for adequacy, fairness, and objectivity, and responds to the OIG. Appropriate corrective action is taken on cases, when necessary.

Public Law 95-452 also provides for protection to FSIS employees who are threatened by any employee who has the authority to take or influence a favorable or unfavorable personnel action, in reprisal for disclosing information or allegations of wrongdoing to an Inspector General. ICS determines whether allegations of reprisal warrant an investigation or inquiry and reports the results to the Administrator, FSIS, Deputy Administrator for Management, and OIG.

*Allegations of Reprisal or Retaliation Resulting from Complaints Other Than OIG Hotline Complaints*

FSIS Notice 33-98, Prevention of Reprisal Policy Statement, dated September 15, 1998, protects the rights of certain employees inside and individuals outside of the Agency. Specifically, the policy prohibits acts of reprisal against non-bargaining unit employees, and those individuals who are not employed by FSIS, who file a complaint or grievance, assists a Department Investigator, or is involved in other activities protected by USDA laws or regulations. While the FSIS Civil Rights Division has primary responsibility for receiving and processing reprisal cases, Internal Control Staff assists that office in investigating complaints of reprisal. ICS reports the findings to the Civil Rights Office for appropriate action.

To carry out the investigative function when reprisal is alleged, FSIS follows the guidelines set forth in Department Personnel Bulletin No. 752-1, Policy on Reprisal, dated July 31, 1997. The policy prohibits reprisal and retaliation against any employee for disclosing allegations of wrongdoing that pertain to federal statutes, rules, or regulations.

*Reports of Assaults, Threats, Intimidation, or Interference*

FSIS Directive 4735.4, Revision 1, Reporting Assault, Threats, and Intimidation, or Interference, dated October 22, 1997, outlines responsibilities for FSIS employees (usually Inspection and Compliance Personnel who perform official duties at inspection plants), to report incidences of assault, threats of assault, intimidation, or interference by regulated industry personnel. The directive also establishes a process for employees and supervisors to follow in reporting and resolving issues with industry personnel. Although these types of cases are usually investigated and resolved by the District Manager where the incident occurred, Internal Control Staff maintains complete oversight responsibility, monitor trends, and conducts follow up activity when necessary.

Also, FSIS Directive 4735.7, Industry Accusations Against Inspection Personnel, dated October 22, 1997, establishes policy and procedures for processing and resolving complaints that industry presents against FSIS inspection personnel.

If you have a problem or a concern that you believe adversely affects FSIS programs, employees, or others, please contact the appropriate office immediately, to report the matter.

If you would like additional information about ICS's investigative role, you may contact us at 202-720-5959.

## SUPPLIES

### Recycling Packing Materials

by Pete Bridgeman  
Administrative Services Division  
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We received an e-mail suggestion from Ed Scott, DVM, Knoxville, TN,

that we'd like to pass along to all of our Landover Service Center customers:

*I wish to offer something to help with the recycling effort that is of concern to all of us. As an afterthought, I recently took the foam "worms" from my Landover shipment to a Mail Boxes, Etc. franchise to ask if they could utilize them rather than my putting them in the trash. They readily accepted them and gave me a piece of paper that was good for \$1.00 off their packing service and thanking each user for their recycling participation.*

*Extending this recycling to the personal shipments we get at our homes that contain foam of this nature would benefit our national recycling effort that much more.*

*There are certainly other packaging businesses similar to Mail Boxes, Etc., across the nation doing this same service of taking in this recyclable item. This packing foam is not biodegradable, and only takes up space in landfills if we don't make the attempt to get it reused.*

*If notice could be put in The Service Beacon ...and...a flyer inserted in shipments from Landover to encourage us to make a concerted effort to get this foam recycled, we all stand to benefit. Thanks.*

We would like to thank you, Ed, for sharing that excellent idea with all of our customers. (Incidentally, the "foam worms" that Landover uses as packing material are actually made from a biodegradable wheat bi-product, but it is still a good idea to reuse it instead of just throwing it away.) Instead of inserting a flyer in shipments from Landover, we'll save a few trees and have a statement of encouragement printed on the packing list that comes with your order.

If you have any suggestions, ideas or feedback concerning the Field Supply System, we are always open to hearing them, and if feasible, implementing changes you recommend. We consider this *your* supply system - we are just here to serve your needs, and to make it as efficient and user-friendly as we possibly can.

### Mixed Orders Getting Better

We are beginning to see a lot fewer orders coming into Landover mixed (Supply Items mixed on the same order as Forms/Specialty Items). While our method of publishing locations where mixed orders were coming from has been very effective, this has apparently caused a lot of discomfort. This was not our intention, and we apologize for creating this perception. Our intention was only to fix an ongoing problem quickly and efficiently, and since this has been accomplished, we will discontinue publishing these lists. Our thanks go out to all of our customers who are taking the time to do it right.

### Plastic Tanker Seals Coming

The metal "Tanker Seals" used in Egg Products Inspection, Item Number FSIS-EPI-01, are going to be replaced by a red plastic seal. This change is being made to try to make these seals safer to work with, while maintaining the full integrity of the seal. We expect these to be in stock at Landover by the end of this month (April). These will continue to have the same item number (FSIS-EPI-01), and the same unit of issue (HD). Once the metal seals have been replaced by the plastic seals, please ensure that any excess metal seals you have in stock are destroyed, and document your accountable files, accordingly.

### Foreign Meat Seals ("Red-Head Seals")

We have a small supply of Foreign Meat ("Redhead") Seals, used for Imported product only, available from our Beltsville office. If you have a need for any of these seals, please contact the Personal Property, Vehicle and Supply Staff at 1-800-714-8335. These are not stocked in Landover (we've only had 1 request for these in 2 1/2 years, but they apparently are still used in certain applications).

### Hantover Account Number Correction

In the January issue of *The Service Beacon*, we provided information regarding Personal Inspection Equipment items available from Hantover, Inc., at special discount prices. The account number to use when ordering these items from Hantover should be 61378, not 818379. Please note this correction and refer to account number 61378 when placing orders with Hantover, in order to get the special USDA pricing. If you have any questions regarding this, you may call Gary Lowe at 1-800-821-2227. Hantover has honored the pricing for those who have used the 818379 number, but would prefer that we use the 61378 number on all future orders.

### Freezer Vests With Sleeves?

Yes, apparently the vendor who we recently purchased freezer vests from inadvertently mixed some vests with sleeves in with our sleeveless style vests. Some were shipped out to the field before we caught the error. If you received one and really wanted the sleeveless vest, call us at 1-800-714-8335 with the order number, and we will replace it with the correct item. However, if you'd like to keep it, you may. This first came to our attention when we started getting calls from other inspectors

requesting the vests with the sleeves. These are not currently a standard stock item; those that were sent out were done so by mistake. Some inspectors have asked if we could start stocking the vests with the sleeves as a standard stock item. We are not in a position to do that during this fiscal year; the current budget will only allow us to maintain inventory levels of items we currently have in stock. However, we will look at the feasibility of adding these as a stock item for next fiscal year. If you would like to see this item added, in addition to the sleeveless vests and freezer coats, let us know. You can do so by e-mail, memo or fax to any of the above listed numbers or address. If there is enough interest in this item, we will include it in our allocation request for FY 2000.

### Non-Monetary Award Items Update

The purchase orders for these items have been approved and are now on their way to the vendors. A catalog and ordering procedures should be going out to supervisors sometime in May for these items. These items will not be ordered directly from Landover, but through the Human Resources Division (HRD). More details about the items and how to order them will be issued with the catalog.

### Official Government Postage Stamps - 33 Cent Stamps Not Available

The U.S. Postal Service is not planning to print a 33 cent Official Government Postage Stamp. We stock four different denominations of stamps in Landover; 32 cent (FSIS-17A), 23 cent (FSIS-17B), 10 cent (FSIS-17C) and 1 cent (FSIS-17D). The unit of issue for each is HD (100). You can use combinations of the 32 cent and the 1 cent, or the 23 cent and the 10 cent stamps, for the standard 33 cents postage. The

cost for the second ounce of weight has decreased from 23 cents to 22 cents. So, if you have one additional ounce of weight, the 32 cent stamp and the 23 cent stamp will give you the proper postage (reference FSIS Notice 1-99, dated 1/6/99).

### SuperDisk

Beginning in FY 1999, SuperDisk 3.5" 120 MB drives are now standard equipment on FAIM notebook and desktop computers. The increased drive storage capacity will simplify monthly backup procedures and the annual FAIMLOAD software reload. Each computer issued in FY99 and beyond comes with an initial supply of 3 SuperDisk disks. Additional SuperDisk disks will be available from the Landover Service Center in the near future. When these become available, the item number will be published in *The Service Beacon*. The Item Number for these will also be listed in the new catalog, due out in May. These disks will not work in FAIM computers issued prior to FY99.

## TRAVEL

### Estimating Lodging Taxes

by: Barbara McNiff  
Budget Division  
Telephone: 202-720-3016

With lodging taxes now being claimed as a separate miscellaneous expense, it is important to ensure that there is enough authorized under the "Other" block on the travel authorization to cover these taxes, especially when you are doing a blanket, Type C authorization for a meeting in a locale that has a high tax rate. The General Services Administration (GSA) has put on their Web site a chart containing the state tax percentage rates for most of the

cities for which they have established per diem rates. There may be some additional city and local taxes, but this chart will give you a "ball park" idea of the taxes the employees will be assessed.

For those employees with World Wide Web access, you can access this information through the Office of Management's Budget and Travel web page at:

<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/om/budget.htm>

Alternatively, you can use the direct GSA address:

<http://www.policyworks.gov/travel>

Click on "Per Diem Rates and Other Travel Information." On the next screen, click on "State Tax Percentage Rates."

### Waivers of Salary Overpayments

When the Fiscal Services Branch, Budget Division, receives a request for a waiver of salary overpayments, it invariably includes a variation of the following: "It was not my fault. I didn't make the error. Why should I be penalized by having to pay it back?"

While the regulations allow us to consider waiving repayment of overpayments that were caused by an administrative error, the fact that it was due to such an error does not automatically mean that a waiver will be granted. The Comptroller General has repeatedly ruled that if employees are given specific documentation, such as salary charts, and leave and earning statements, which, if reviewed, would indicate that an error had been made, and the employee fails to review this documentation, then the employee is at fault. A finding of fault precludes granting a waiver. We would like to remind all employees to review their leave and earning statements to ensure that

they are being paid correctly. This is especially true if you have a major change, such as a promotion, or a change in health or life benefits or you relocate to an area that has a different salary rate from the one from which you transferred. If, for example, an employee signs up for health or life insurance, it is the employee's responsibility to review the leave and earning statements to ensure that deductions are being made to cover these benefits. When employees relocate between geographical areas, it is their responsibility to check the salary charts in FSIS Notice 2-99 to ensure that they are being paid correctly.

### Electronic Airline Tickets

by Walayna Sherard  
Budget Division  
Telephone: 202-720-9851

Some of our employee who order electronic airline tickets are under the impression that if they don't show up at the airport to board the plane, their airline tickets are automatically refunded – this is not so. When employees are issued airline tickets via electronic ticketing and the trip is cancelled, it is the employee's responsibility to notify the travel agency to cancel their reservations. Otherwise, if the reservations are not cancelled, the airline tickets are still charged against the employee's government charge card. In like manner, tickets that are charged to the GVTS account electronically should be cancelled; if not the Agency will not receive credit for the unused airline tickets.

### Relocation Income Tax Allowance

by: Gary Smith  
Budget Division  
Telephone: 202-690-6066

All employees who received reimbursements for relocation expenses in CY 1998, must file a Relocation Income Tax (RIT) claim in calendar year 1999. We have

checked with the National Finance Center (NFC), but, they have not yet received the tax charts from the Internal Revenue Service, which they need to compute the RIT claims. However, they are hoping to have them by March 31. Thus, we anticipate NFC will begin processing RIT claims on or about April 15, 1999. Employees may begin to submit their RIT claims to the Fiscal Services Branch (FSB) and we will hold them until NFC notifies us that they are beginning to process the RIT claims. Forms AD-616R and AD-1000 for the RIT claims can be obtained from FSB by calling or writing to the Fiscal Services Branch.

Requests for the forms can be faxed to 202-690-3989.

## OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

### National Public Health Week: April 5-11, 1999

by Tom Wright

Administrative Services Division  
Telephone: 301-504-4246

National Public Health Week is April 5-11, 1999. This week was established in 1995 as a way to recognize the contributions of public health and prevention services to America's well being. The weeklong event focuses public attention on Federal, State, community, and individual efforts at preventing public health problems, such as teenage pregnancies, food-borne diseases, and injury at work and in the home. The theme for the Week is:

*Public Health. Healthy People in  
Healthy Communities*

Did you know that hand washing is the simplest yet the most powerful daily routine to help stay healthy? We need to "Lather Up For Good Health" before we touch or serve

food or treat a wound. All of us, especially inspection and laboratory personnel, need to wash our hands after handling raw meat. Use warm running water and soap. Lather up for 20 seconds, rinse well and dry. Hand washing is a critical part of a complete health program, which includes proper immunization, healthy diet, and adequate sleep.

### International Building Safety Week: April 4-10, 1999

by Roger Perkerewicz

Administrative Services Division  
Telephone: 303-497-5411

International Building Safety Week is an annual event that recognizes the significant roles, building departments, building codes and building code officials play in public safety. This year the theme is:

*A Safer World Is On The Horizon*

This event should remind all of us in the importance of safety in the buildings where we work.

1998 saw more than 55 incidents that the President declared major disasters or emergencies. Storms, tornadoes, wild fires, flooding and mudslides touched over 900 counties in the United States. Some counties were declared major disasters more than once last year. Are we prepared for this type of disaster at our workplace?

FSIS Directive 4791-13, Workplace Inspections, and Injury, Illness and Motor Vehicle Incident Reporting addresses workplace inspections and the use of the safety and health checklists FSIS-4791-23 and 24. These checklists remind us of the importance and the requirements of some of the following; evacuation routes, emergency telephone numbers, fire alarms, exit signs, egress to exit routes, handrails for stairways, and emergency plans for all types of disasters. Identifying the hazard also involves correcting and

reporting the hazard as instructed in FSIS-4791-12, Reporting and Correcting Occupational Hazards. The use of the form 4791-27, Report of Alleged Safety or Health Hazard alerts all levels of the hazard, the corrective action and helps to identify problem areas in the workplace. When a hazard is identified that can not be corrected immediately is found, that hazard should be identified on form 4791-22, Notice of Unsafe or Unhealthful Working Conditions and posted for all employees.

Building safety is the concern of everyone and should not go unnoticed. Become more aware of your surroundings. Know your emergency procedures. Identify unsafe conditions. Be prepared, no one knows when and where a disaster will strike. If you see a problem, tell your supervisor, and let us continue to work together for a safe work environment.

## VEHICLES

### Mileage Reports

by Brian McNiff

Administrative Services Division  
Telephone: 301-504-4221

All personnel driving government vehicles are reminded that they are required to report their monthly mileage each month upon receipt of the GSA Form 494. By completing this form upon receipt, FSIS can avoid estimated billings. Failure to complete the mileage report by the due date results in the Agency being charged an estimated mileage charge that will again have to be adjusted when the correct mileage is recorded. The correct mileage will not be recorded unless the GSA Form 494 is completed when due; all late reports are discarded.

## Vehicle Maintenance

Upon receipt of the GSA Form 3478 (Motor Vehicle Service Authorization) arrangements must be made to have the required maintenance performed by the requested due date.

Prior to having any unscheduled maintenance performed, you must call the Maintenance Control Center (MCC). The toll-free MCC phone number is 1-888-622-6344. This number is also used to report any mechanical problems with your vehicle.

## Long Waits For Vehicles From Fleet Management Centers

Pete Bridgeman and Brian McNiff attended the national IMEAC (Inter-Agency Motor Equipment Advisory Council) Conference held in Corpus Christ, TX, the week of 3/8/99, where we got to meet with all of the GSA Regional Fleet Managers and discuss various problems and concerns we have had with GSA leased vehicles. Our most prevalent problem has been obtaining vehicles in a timely manner from the Fleet Management Centers. We found that this has been a problem all over the country, and that our waits have actually been less than many other agencies have experienced. Since FSIS leases exclusively from GSA, we are given priority on the availability of vehicles. But our fleet has grown from about 820 vehicles in FY-97 to over 1000 vehicles today, with about 70 additional vehicles currently on order from GSA. This drastic

increase in numbers of vehicles has resulted in excessive delays in obtaining vehicles from some of the fleet management centers. In a number of cases, they just don't have the additional vehicles available. They are taking steps to address this problem, but don't see a whole lot of improvement on the horizon. They are operating under tight budget constraints just like we are.

If you have been waiting longer than 4 months for a requested vehicle, please make sure that we are aware that you have been waiting - we will take whatever steps we can to try to expedite the process. When a vehicle does become available at a fleet management center and you are notified, it is crucial that you pick it up immediately, or it may be given to another agency. GSA won't "sit" on a vehicle for very long.

## ISSUANCES

### Recent Agency Issuances

by Mary Wissman  
Administrative Services Division  
Telephone: 301-504-4233

The following notices and directives have been issued since the March 1999 edition of *The Service Beacon*. Many recent issuances are available in an electronic format from the "PCDIALS" library in Opendesk and from the "Agency Issuances" public folder in the Exchange mail system (Outlook).

Notice 7-99 (3/5/99)

Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy Statement

Notice 8-99 (3/9/99)  
Equal Employment Opportunity Policy Statement

Directive 3800.2 (3/11/99)  
Reimbursement for Use of Privately Owned Vehicles Revision 3  
Amendment 4

Directive 7111.1 (3/3/99)  
Performance Standards for the Production of Certain Meat and Poultry Products

Directives and notices are distributed automatically to applicable Agency employees and offices. Additional copies are available from:

USDA, FSIS, ASD, P&DS  
Maildrop 5241  
5601 Sunnyside Avenue  
Beltsville, MD 20705-5241

Tel: 301-504-4242  
Fax: 301-504-4277

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The current and past editions of *The Service Beacon* are available electronically on the FSIS OpenDesk and Exchange mail systems as well as on the FSIS Website at: [www.fsis.usda.gov/om/beacon.htm](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/om/beacon.htm)

<b><i>Date</i></b>	<b><i>Item</i></b>
March-May 1998	Budget Initiatives Prepared by FSIS Programs
May-June 1998	Budget Request Prepared by Budget Division, and Reviewed and Cleared by FSIS Administrator and Undersecretary for Food Safety
July 1998	FSIS Request – “Agency Estimates” – Submitted to USDA
July 1998	FSIS Request Presented in Person to USDA Secretary by Administrator and Under Secretary
August -September 1998	USDA Issues Preliminary Allowance, Considers Appeals, and Issues Final Department Allowance
September 1998	USDA Request – “Department Estimates” – Submitted to Office of Management and Budget (OMB)
October-November 1998	USDA Estimates Reviewed by OMB
Thanksgiving-December 1998	OMB Issues Preliminary Allowance, Considers Appeals, and Issues Final Allowance (“Passback” process) for “President’s Budget”
First Monday of February 1999	President’s Budget Submitted to Congress
March 1999	House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittee Hearings Conducted
April 1999	Edits to Transcripts of Hearings and Final Responses to Questions (Q&As) Submitted to House and Senate Appropriations Subcomm.
April 1999	Congress Adopts Concurrent Resolutions on Budget Ceilings
June-July 1999	House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees “Mark Up” Budget (Draft Appropriations Bills and Committee Reports)
June-July 1999	Appropriations Bills Sent to House and Senate for Vote
August-September 1999	Joint House and Senate Conference Resolves Differences in Bills
September 1999	Congress Passes USDA Appropriations Bill
September 1999	President Signs or Vetoes USDA Appropriations Act
October 1999	Congress Passes Continuing Resolution(s) Until Full Year Appropriations Bill is Enacted (if necessary)
October 1999	Fiscal Year 2000 Begins